



Fact Sheet

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	Cold	Flu	Pneumonia
What are the symptoms?	Sore throat; runny nose; nasal congestion; watery eyes; and sneezing are the most common symptoms. Some people may also experience a cough and mild fatigue and body aches	Sudden onset of fever, often high and lasting 3-4 days; headache; body aches; severe fatigue lasting up to 2 or 3 weeks; cough, (usually a dry cough) are the most common symptoms. Some people may also experience a runny nose, congestion or sore throat	Persistent dry cough or productive cough, fever and chills, difficulty breathing, chest pain, headache
How long does it last?	3 - 7 days	1 - 2 weeks	Pneumonia may be caused by a virus or a bacteria. The duration of the illness depends on the germ.
How long are people infectious (able to spread the disease)?	Varies from 2 days to 3 weeks	Up to 7 days from the start of symptoms	This is not known for sure, although the theory is that communicability may end within 24 hours of beginning antibiotic treatment.
How is it treated?	Colds are caused by a virus, usually a rhinovirus; antibiotics will not help anyone recover from a cold. We all know this, but, there really is no cure for the cold. The best treatment is to get plenty of rest and drink a lot of liquids. Over-the-counter cough and cold products may offer temporary relief of some of the symptoms.	Flu is caused by a virus; antibiotics will not help anyone recover from the flu. There are anti-viral medicines available that may help reduce the severity and duration of the flu, but only if started within 48 hours of the start of symptoms. Other treatment includes getting plenty of rest and drinking a lot of liquids. Aspirin or acetaminophen will help a fever and pain. Children with the flu should not take aspirin.	Most people who get bacterial pneumonia can be treated with a course of antibiotics. People with viral pneumonia usually get well with supportive care (fluids, rest, adequate nutrition) alone. Severe viral pneumonia are treated with anti-viral medicines. See your doctor for a productive cough, or a cough with a fever, that lasts longer than 3 weeks.
What causes it?	Colds are caused by any one of hundreds of different viruses. The virus is spread through respiratory drops when a person coughs or sneezes. The large number of viruses that can cause a cold is one reason that a vaccine has not/can not be developed at this time	Influenza is caused by a virus. The virus is spread through respiratory drops when a person coughs or sneezes. There are 3 different types of flu viruses, but the most common are Type A and Type B. While there are 2 basic types that cause the flu, there are various strains of each and they mutate, which is why people need to be vaccinated each year.	Most pneumonia are caused by exposure to a common bacteria or virus. People with weakened immune systems are more likely to catch pneumonia
What can people do to avoid these "bugs"?	WASH YOUR HANDS! Frequent hand washing is the best defense against cold viruses. Avoiding crowds, and limiting contact with people who are coughing or sneezing will also help to reduce the chance of getting a cold	GET A FLU SHOT! * The shot can't cause the flu. The worst case is that in a very few cases, a person's arm may be a little sore for a few days or, even less likely, may feel weak or have a slight fever for a couple of days. * If you are allergic to eggs, pregnant or have a chronic disease, check with your physician before getting a flu shot. Avoiding crowds and frequent hand washing will also help to reduce the risk of getting the flu.	Anyone who is at high risk should get a pneumonia vaccination. Those considered to be at high risk are people over 65, premature babies, people with chronic cardiovascular and respiratory problems, people with diabetes and chronic liver disease, people who are immune compromised, anyone with sickle cell disease, and residents of nursing homes or long term care facilities